Manitoba Pork Council

HORIZONS

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The Impact of Bill 17

Bill 17 isn't about the environment. It's about the 1,200 farmers and their families who have made hog farming a way of life here in Manitoba. It's also about the 15,000 other Manitobans who support and feed their families because of jobs created by the hog industry. Hog farming has been a success story in Manitoba, yet the provincial government is going to put an end to that with Bill 17. Bill 17 will have a tremendous impact on thousands of people across this province. Here are just a few of their stories.

George Matheson

Twenty-five years ago, George Matheson and his wife Shelley decided to move from Winnipeg to the family homestead near Stonewall. They have made farming a way of life and are teaching their four children how to raise hogs and care about the environment. Yet the Matheson family legacy is being threatened by Bill 17. The proposed bill will prevent George from ever expanding his operation to bring his children into the business. However, his brother Bill, who raises cattle on the adjoining section of land, can expand his operation anytime he wants and plans to do just that so he can bring his own children into the cattle business. There is no logic to Bill 17. One farmer can grow his business for the future, while Bill 17 stifles another farmer's opportunities forever.

Starlite Colony

Starlite Colony is a champion of the hog industry in Manitoba. In April, the growing Hutterite colony received a Swine Stewardship Award for its efforts to promote and educate the public and the media about hog farming by opening its doors to tours and education. Yet this hog industry promoter is now being frozen in its attempts to grow for the future. Starlite Colony purchased land near Morris with plans to expand and create a new hog operation, which would serve as the economic basis for the community. As Hutterite colonies traditionally do, Starlite had plans to create a new colony as it grew in population. Now that Bill 17 is looming, the land in Morris sits empty as the colony may very well be prohibited from building a hog barn on that site. That, in turn, puts the whole idea of creating another colony into question. Again, Bill 17 has squashed opportunities and potential for the future, impacting hundreds of people.

Olayinka Brimoh

Olayinka Brimoh emigrated to Canada because he thought it was a land of opportunity. After working in Alberta for a couple of years, he bought a hog barn in the R.M. of Morris and moved to Manitoba. He has been working hard and struggling to keep it going through the industry crisis. Now the only hog farmer in the small town of Aubigny, he is committed to farming and growing his hog business. Yet by placing the moratorium on further expansion, the provincial government has essentially killed Brimoh's future plan. Brimoh now says he regrets his move back to Manitoba and if he could turn the clock back, he would. He says if he could

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Although Manitoba Pork Council regularly includes promotional inserts and advertising with the newsletter we do not endorse paid advertisements. We encourage you to research any companies you plan to do business with.

Chairman's Viewpoint

By Karl Kynoch, Manitoba Pork Council

In June, hundreds of people descended upon the Manitoba legislature to speak out against Bill 17, the anti-farm bill. The Standing Committee on Agriculture & Food, which is reviewing Bill 17, heard presentations from 315 people and reviewed at least two dozen more written submissions.

The overwhelming majority of these presentations were in support of the hog industry. Over 98 per cent of the presenters spoke out against Bill 17, which puts a permanent ban on any hog barn development on 6.7 million acres in the province. The vast majority called for the government to withdraw Bill 17 and stop using the hog industry as its environmental scapegoat.

On behalf of Manitoba Pork Council, I want to thank each and every person who took the time to speak out against Bill 17. It was no easy task. Not only was it somewhat intimidating for many people to speak in front of such a large, formal committee, it also required stamina and perseverance to sit through many long nights to wait for their turn to speak. With the large number of presenters, the committee sat for 14-hour days and heard presentations as late as 3:00 a.m. for many nights in a row. Many people drove in from the country, waited all night to speak and had to return the next evening for their chance to present.

I was very impressed with the dedication and commitment to this industry that so many people showed through this process. Farmers, their families and industry supporters turned out in droves to speak out against this Bill. While some people spoke out, others showed up to simply show their support and that was equally important. No matter what the provincial government decides to do with Bill 17, we can say that we put up the good fight.

More people registered and spoke out against Bill 17 than any other bill in the province's history. That speaks volumes about the concern that is out there about this anti-farm bill and the impact it will have on the hog industry in this province if it is put through. We all know that Bill 17 will do nothing to protect Lake Winnipeg. But it will hurt thousands of families and ultimately lead to the demise of one of Manitoba's most successful agricultural sectors.

Hog farmers have become the government's political scapegoat for the problems of Lake Winnipeg, despite the fact that Manitoba hog farmers follow some of the strictest environmental rules and regulations in North America. Phosphorus from land on which hog manure has been applied accounts for no more than about 1.5 per cent of the nutrient loading into Lake Winnipeg. Ironically, the City of Winnipeg was allowed to dump large amounts of raw sewage into the Red River on one of the very days that the Standing Committee was listening to presentations on Bill 17.

Moving forward, it is now up to the government to decide what to do with Bill 17. When the Legislature resumes on September 8, Bill 17 will be up on the table again. It must be called for a third reading before it can be put into law. There is some more opportunity for debate, but the future of hog farming is in the provincial government's hands. The government will decide to withdraw the bill or implement Bill 17 and start the demise of the hog industry.

In the meantime, it is important that we continue to speak up against the bill. I encourage each and every one of you to write a letter or send an email to your MLA, the Minister of Conservation Stan Struthers, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Rosann Wowchuk and Premier Gary Doer.

If Bill 17 is enacted, it is permanent and it will be very difficult to have it removed. Bill 17 is not temporary. It is forever – it is a permanent taking of farmers' rights. That means there will be permanent ban on our industry and no one will be able to build a new hog barn or expand current facilities in the future. Again, this will ultimately lead to the demise of hog farming in Manitoba. We need to do all we can to urge the government to withdraw Bill 17 before it is too late.

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sell his barn today, he would leave the province because there is no future for his family here. With Bill 17, the provincial government is taking away opportunity and potentially driving people out of our province.

Lyle Peters

Lyle Peters and his wife Maneesha were nominated as Manitoba's Outstanding Farmer last spring. After growing up on a farm in Manitoba, Peters got an agri-business degree from University of Manitoba and chose to move back to the farm because he saw opportunities. As a young farmer, he says he has always wanted to live and work on the farm and expand the farm to create new opportunities. Bill 17 dashes those hopes and dreams. It also prevents people like Peters from passing on further opportunities to his children. Moving to the western part of the province – outside of the ban area – is simply not an option due to economics. He also says there is cause for concern about other areas of agriculture. If the government can do this to the hog sector today and limit any future growth, who is next? Hog farmers may be the environmental scapegoat today, but who's the next target? When it comes to agriculture in this province, Peters says it's a concern to know what to do in the future.

Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling in the United States

At the end of July, the United States Department of Agriculture released its ruling on how it has interpreted the legislation passed by Congress earlier this year on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) for a wide variety of products, including beef and pork. These regulations will become effective after 30th September 2008. The implications for Manitoba hog producers are profound because we ship so many animals and meat products to the US. We do not want any hesitancy from US processors and retailers about incorporating Canadian origin animals in their product lines. For Manitoba, the US is one of our best markets and cannot be replaced at short notice.

The new regulations will provide for four categories of origin for meat:

1. Product of the United States: animals have to be born, raised and slaughtered in the US.
2. Multiple Countries-of-Origin: animals were born in Canada, raised and slaughtered in the US (label will possibly read 'Product of the US and/or Canada').
3. Imported for Immediate Slaughter: label will read possibly 'Product of Canada and the US'.
4. Covered Commodity that is Foreign Country-of-Origin: label will read 'Product of Canada'; this label has been used for many years for meat cuts shipped directly to the US.

Fortunately, these rules do not apply to restaurants, small retailers, institutions, processed products; there are detailed definitions of these products. Exported products are also exempt.

The regulations will be implemented in a phased manner over the first six months to give the food industry time to adjust. COOL is a retail labeling law and there will have to be extensive recording keeping systems put into place as the different players protect themselves from liability issues. American farmers are going to have to keep some records simply to ensure they can meet the requirements of their processors. This is all cost which will eat into everyone's margins. USDA estimates the annual cost at over $2 billion.

Over the next four to six weeks, the meat processing and retail companies will be announcing their plans on how they are going to conform to the legislation. This is a massive task as it applies to all products such as muscle cuts which are retailed throughout the US. If the major retailers decide that they are going to use the second category label, then there should be little disruption in our present trade in weanlings with the US. If retailers decide that for liability reasons they only want products from processors with the US product only label, then we will have a huge problem. To provide an idea of scale, Canada shipped over nine million live pigs into the US in 2007, or almost one third of the Canadian pig crop. Manitoba alone ships over four million weanlings into US finisher barns. The Canadian government has already indicated it will look at some form of trade action if COOL results in economic injury to Canadian farmers. Chair Karl Kynoch and I attended a workshop organized by the meat processors and retailers in Chicago on August 13. Based on the questions and discussion, we were left with the impression that the major processors and retailers will use the Multiple Country of Origin label. This is good news for weanling producers but shipments of live animals are going to face difficulties.

Manitoba currently ships about 13,000 finished pigs per week into the US. These pigs would have to be labeled under the third category, and the major processing plants are very unlikely to use two labels. However a smaller plant, which sells its entire product into export, or processes the meat for restaurants or institutions, which are excluded from the labeling requirements, may come to the fore. Further, there is an oddity in the COOL regulations which allows animals which are kept in the US for more than 14 days before slaughter, to be labeled under category 2. Whether it is feasible to do this with finished pigs is unknown. Manitoba processors should have additional processing capacity by late spring to absorb most of this flow of animals, but there are going to be major uncertainties in the finished pig market for the next eight months. The good news so far is that future prices are looking much better.

The next four to six weeks are going to be crucial. Before October 1, all retailers across the whole of the US will have to make major decisions on what lines of products they are going to handle under these new COOL regulations. This will impact meat packers and processors very quickly. We will keep members informed on developments as they unfold.

Health and Safety

Manitoba Pork Council has revised its Health and Safety manual. The manual is designed specifically for hog production and guides barn staff in creating a health and safety program suitable to your operation. If you would like a copy of the manual, please contact Miles Beaudin, Swine Program Specialist, at (204) 235-2305 or toll free at 1-888-893-7447.

Good News For Weanling Exporters

On August 6, the federal government announced it will reduce the cost of export certificates for live animals to a maximum of $75 for a one year period starting October 1, 2008 and ending September 30, 2009.

Currently weanling exporters pay about $300 - $400 per load. The cost structure is based on a per pig approach: $15 for the first pig, $0.50 for the next 50 pigs, and $0.15 for any others. The federal minister of agriculture has set $75 as the maximum amount to be charged per load.

Manitoba Pork Council, through the Canadian Pork Council, has been asking the federal government for many years to change the method of fee assessment, especially since American pig exporters pay only about $12 per load. This change to the fee structure is a step in the right direction to ensure Canadian pig producers can compete on a level playing field with our American counterparts. Manitoba producers export over four million weanlings each year to finishing barns in the United States. Manitoba Pork Council Director Larry Friesen, on behalf of weanling exporters, has played a lead role in encouraging the federal government to review these export certificate fees and bring them in line with those charged by the American government.

For details follow this link on the Government of Canada website: http://canadagazette.gc.ca/partII/2008/20080806/pdf/g2-14216.pdf.

Helping Farmers Get Through Tough Times

Last fall, the Manitoba Pork Credit Corporation was set up to administer the Advance Payments Program for the hog sector on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The program has provided $45 million in loans to hog farmers in less than a year.

"The program has been very well received," says Ron Marchenski, manager of the Advance Payments Program for Manitoba Pork Credit Corporation. "There is a real need – farmers are calling all the time."

In fact, it's been a challenge to keep up with all of the loan requests. Marchenski and two part-time staff, are dedicated to putting through as many loans as quickly as they can. They are doing everything they can to get money to farmers as soon as possible.

The program has already been a big success. For the 2008-2009 year, Marchenski says they will put through more than $50 million in loans to hog farmers. Combined with loans for 2007-2008, that's more than 250 loans to farmers across Western Canada.

The Advance Payments Program is not only available to hog farmers in Manitoba, but in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC as well. Manitoba Pork Credit Corporation administers the program for Western Canada out of the Manitoba Pork Council office in Winnipeg.

Ron Marchenski, Manitoba Pork Credit Corporation.

For more information or to apply for a loan, contact Ron Marchenski at 1-866-557-5452 or 1-204-233-1913.

Employment Standards

Barn employees working in a Manitoba hog barn are now imposed under the new employment standards unless they are family to the owner of the farm. Manitoba Pork Council has developed a generic employment contract that may be used by a hog farm employer, and it incorporates the new employment standards. If you are an employer and would like a copy of this contract or would like to discuss the new regulations, please contact Miles Beaudin, Swine Program Specialist, toll free at 1-888-893-7447 or (204) 235-2305.

Special Programs Coordinator Susan Riese and Ontario Pork's Kimberly Green most pictured) represented Pork Marketing Canada (PMC) at the Dieticians of Canada Conference held in Winnipeg from June 12-14, 2008. The trade show was a win-win for participants and exhibitors by providing many networking and marketing opportunities, in addition to the informative sessions on various nutrition and health related topics offered during the conference.

Great Tastes of Manitoba

September 27 - "Pork Packs a Punch" with Marlene McDonald
November 15 - "Sweet and Succulent Pork" with Susan Riese

The new series will run from September 13 - December 2, 2008 and can be seen Saturday evenings at 6:30 p.m. on CTV.

Touch the Farm

At the 58th Annual Red River Exhibition, which ran from June 13-22, thousands of visitors came through the Touch the Farm doors to learn about farm animals and their welfare. Our multi-coloured piglets continue to be a big attraction.

Upcoming Events

September 20 - 23: *Allan D Leman Swine Conference*
Minnesota, USA
Tel: 1-800-380-8636
www.cvm.umn.edu

September 23 & 24: *29th Western Nutrition Conference*
Edmonton, AB
Tel: (780) 492-3236

September 23 - 25: *Amazing Ag Adventure*
Red River Exhibition Park, Winnipeg, MB
www.aitc.mb.ca/AmazingAgricultureAdventure.htm

October 22: *Swine Technology Workshop*
Red Deer, AB
Tel: (403) 244-7821

November 6 & 7: *Farm Safety & Health Seminar*
Greenwood Inn & Suites, Winnipeg, MB
www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/farmsafety

November 18 & 19: *Saskatchewan Pork Industry Symposium*
Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK
Tel: 1-866-244-7675
www.saskpork.com

December 3 & 4: *Hog and Poultry Days*
Winnipeg Convention Centre, Winnipeg, MB
www.hogandpoultrydays.com

December 5 & 6: *Maritime Beef & Pork Conference*
The Delta, Prince Edward Island
seebertw@eastlink.ca

January 15 - 17, 2009: *Manitoba Ag Days*
Brandon, MB
Tel: 1-866-487-4029
www.aitc.mb.ca

January 20-23, 2009: *Banff Pork Seminar*
Banff, AB
Tel: (780) 492-3651
www.banffpork.ca

January 30 & 31, 2009: *Manitoba Swine Seminar*
More details to follow.

April 7, 2009: *Manitoba Pork Council Annual General Meeting & Banquet*
The Fairmont Winnipeg
Tel: 1-888-893-7447
www.manitobapork.com

Promotions

Pork on a Bun events help create community spirit and raise money for charity

June 6, 2008: Maple Grove Rugby Park - The cool, wet weather didn't dampen the spirits of our grill team, as they enthusiastically prepared to feed hundreds of Relay for Life participants at this year's Winnipeg event. A Pork on a Bun supper and pork sausages served at breakfast helped satisfy the appetites of those that walked through the night in support of this worthy cause. Relay, which is held in 10 locations across the province between May and August, celebrates cancer survivors, remembers loved ones and fights back in the hope of finding a cure for cancer. This annual community event has raised $900,000 thus far provincially and Manitoba Pork Council was proud to be a gold sponsor.

July 22, 2008; Southwood Golf & Country Club - Tom Jackson, an accomplished Canadian musician and actor well known for his music and humanitarian work, recently teamed up with Manitoba's largest food bank to bring "Swinging for Supper" to Winnipeg. Connecting music with golf has been a successful combination for this 2-day fundraising event that is taking place in several major centers across the country. As a supporter of food security initiatives, Council donated the pulled pork for the pre-golf concert, as well as Pork on a Bun at the sold-out tournament. Our cart staff also offered golfers an opportunity to enter a unique chipping contest, the "Swine Swing", for a chance to win some fantastic pork prizes. The concert and tournament raised over $20,000, which Winnipeg Harvest is able to leverage at a rate of 1 loonie:$20 worth of groceries for those in need.

August 17, 2008; Carman Community Hall - District 5 delegates escaped the heat by serving Pork on a Bun inside the Carman Community Hall to the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who attended the 2008 Power Smart Manitoba Summer Games Volunteer Wind-up, while barbeque cart staff "kept em' comin" on the grills outside. Over 1600 young athletes, 1200 volunteers, numerous sponsors and countless spectators thoroughly enjoyed the many activities and sporting events that took place from August 11 - 17 in Carman and the surrounding area. Manitoba Pork Council was proud to be a "Friend of the Games" and donated $5000 towards the purchase of pork products, which helped "fuel" the athletes' quest for gold and take their sport development to new heights. The Power Smart Manitoba Winter Games will take place in Portage la Prairie in March, 2010.

PorkSports

Pigs and pork products – a "home-run" with baseball fans

On July 29, Winnipeg Goldeyes fans were treated to an exciting evening of baseball at CanWest Global Park, for which Manitoba Pork was the game sponsor. Council tried covering all the bases by providing the sell-out crowd with a fun night of food and entertainment. This included a chance for spectators to hone their catching skills by snatching one of 450 stress pigs tossed into the crowd at the bottom of the 5th inning. Those folks lucky enough to catch a black pig were able to show their prize to Goldie's Grill concession staff and "score" a complimentary 7oz serving of tasty Pork Sirloin Bites. Prior to the 7 p.m. opening pitch thrown by Council's General Manager, Andrew Dickson, fans were invited to partake in a Pork on a Bun barbeque. Hundreds of hungry patrons lined up for a delicious smoked pork loin sandwich in exchange for a minimum $2 donation to the Field of Dreams Foundation. The carts sold out 30 minutes prior to game time and raised just over $800 for charity. Although our squeeze pigs and pork products were a grand slam with fans, the Goldeyes lost 14-10 to the Gary South Shore Railcats. But the evening ended on a high note with a spectacular fireworks display that was a big hit for the 7556 fans in attendance.